



Forest and tree species distribution in North Rhine-Westphalia

The proportion of land made up by forests varies widely in the different regions of this federal state. In the Rhine district of Neuss, forest coverage is only about 7%, whereas in Siegen-Wittgenstein, the most thickly wooded district in Germany, forests account for almost 70%. Most forests are located in the Eifel, Bergisches Land, Sauerland and Siegerland regions as well as in Ostwestfalen-Lippe.

Structure and tasks of the State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia

The State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia consists of 14 Regional Forestry Offices, the Eifel National Park Forestry Office and the Training and Test Forestry Office in Arnsberg. The forest wardens in a total of 300 forest districts ensure that there is a state-wide presence.

The State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia's main tasks are to sustainably maintain and develop the roles that forests play, to manage the state forest and to provide forestry services – e.g. assisting forest owners in the management of their forests.

Other tasks include forest supervision (right of access, forest transformation, fire protection, etc.), the implementation of forestry and forest-based programmes (e.g. with a view to promoting the energetic and non-energetic use of wood) and the education of the public about the manifold and – above all – elementary significance of the forest to the people.



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Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia For people and forests





Dear Readers,

There is a great necessity to use and manage forest ecosystems sustainably and responsibly. Our State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia is the contact point for all people, forest owners and forest-based industries in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The state government's climate protection initiative has meant that wood as a renewable resource has become increasingly important. We support the domestic forestry and forest-based industries and help "wood" as an economic factor to assert itself in the global competition.

At the same time, we assume responsibility for our forests as our national heritage. Nature conservation in sustainably managed forests and protected areas such as national parks helps to maintain and increase the functional and biological diversity of our forests.

As the people in North Rhine-Westphalia value their forests very highly as leisure and recreation areas, we believe we have a duty to promote the forest both regarding its feel-good factor and as a learning location.

Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia – a modern and sustainable operation that is focused on the well-being of people and nature.

Yours sincerely

Andreas Wiebe
Head of State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber
North Rhine-Westphalia

The forests in North Rhine-Westphalia

North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) is Germany's most populous federal state with over 18 million inhabitants. It extends over an area of 3.4 million hectares. About 27% (915,800 hectares) of this area is covered by forests. At 67%, the percentage of private forests is higher than in any other federal state.

In the heavily industrialised state of North Rhine-Westphalia, forests play an important role in providing protection and as a recreational area, and are of crucial importance to the preservation of biodiversity. In addition, the forests in NRW are also of great economic significance.

Economic power for the environment and the people

With some 180,000 jobs and an annual turnover of more than € 38 billion, forestry and forest-based industries are of market-leading significance today. Wood is our most important environmentally friendly and renewable resource. With a share of two thirds, the sawmilling industry is the forestry sector's principal customer. About a quarter of the wood is used for the production of particleboards and paper.

In light of the phasing out of nuclear power in Germany, the use of wood as an energy source will continue to gain in importance. But the material and chemical use of wood has also become increasingly important. With its area-wide presence and future-oriented focus, the State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia plays an important role in the forestry and wood cluster.

Habitat for animals and plants

Site-specific, environmentally sound forest management preserves the cycle of nature and ensures that forests are vibrant and healthy as a good basis for being used sustainably.

More than 70% of the forest area in NRW is classified as landscape or nature conservation areas, fauna-flora habitats (FFH) or bird sanctuaries. The forests in NRW are a diverse habitat for animals and plants.

In addition, they are of outstanding importance to the drinking-water supply in North Rhine-Westphalia. Most of the reservoirs in NRW are located in the densely wooded regions of the state.

Recreation area for everyone

Whether it is hiking, biking, cross-country skiing or jogging, forests are an important and popular recreation area.

The State Enterprise for Forestry and Timber North Rhine-Westphalia supports tourism and environmental education through forest youth hostels, forest information centres and rangers. They offer a range of programmes and activities with guided forest tours, nature and adventure trails and events in forests dealing with specific themes.

Facts and figures on the forests in North Rhine-Westphalia

Forest area in North Rhine-Westphalia:	915,800 hectares (= 27% of the state surface)
Forest area per inhabitant:	508 m ²
Number of private forest owners:	150,000
subdivided into:	
private forest:	67 per cent
municipal and communal forest:	17 per cent
state forest (North Rhine-Westphalia):	13 per cent
federal forest:	3 per cent
Timber increment per year:	8,3 Mio. m ³ (= 9.1 m ³ per hectare forest)
Forest cut per year:	4,3 Mio. m ³ (= 4.7 m ³ per hectare forest)
Natural forest cells:	74
Total area of FFH sites:	143,000 ha